

MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church & Society REPORT

Report 29 January-February, 1980

Focus on Women in the Speaking Ministry of the Church

Women in the Bible

by Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus

Back in the 1930's when I was a young girl, a minister wrote to my father, a progressive conservative bishop in Virginia, "What are we going to do with those verses (I Cor. 14:34, 35) about the silence of women in the church?" My father answered, "We can't latch on to one or two verses in the Bible about silence just to please our own egos."

That would have been good advice for preachers and teachers of the past who built a doctrine of silence for women in the church based on a few Bible verses while ignoring all the other verses about women. For example:

Miriam was a prophetess, or a prophet as some translations render the word for both male and female (Ex. 15:20). "I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to lead you" (Mt. 6:4, TEV). Some women are gifted to be leaders.

Deborah was a wife, mother, a prophetess (or prophet), a judge of Israel, a leader (Judges 4 & 5). Like many other women in the Bible, she had stature.

Huldah was a prophetess (or prophet) in the time of Jeremiah (II Kings 22:12-20).

Elizabeth and Mary spoke under the inspiration of the Spirit (Lk. 1:41-45).

Anna was a prophetess (Lk. 36-38).

This *Report* focuses on perhaps the most controversial aspect of the whole issue of women in the church: women in the speaking ministry. Somehow the idea of a woman in the pulpit proclaiming the gospel seems to be a hard lump for some Christians to swallow. Why? Are women somehow unclean? Inferior? Or does God reserve this gift for the male sex?

We searched the Scriptures, asked wise people, and studied the times. You can see for yourself the evidence we have collected. Let us know how it has influenced your thinking. We assembled this material with joy and thanksgiving and offer it to you in that spirit.

Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus (Harrisonburg, Virginia) and I compiled the features for this *Report*. Ruth has had an unofficial speaking ministry for years. She has felt

Women were the first persons to be commissioned by Jesus to proclaim the news of His resurrection (Matt. 28:1-10).

Daughters as well as sons "shall prophesy" (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17).

Priscilla, according to the best manuscripts, took the major role and with her husband instructed more perfectly a man (Apollos) who was mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:26).

The four unmarried daughters of Philip were prophetesses proclaiming God's message (Acts 21:9, TEV).

Phoebe was a servant of the church (Rom. 16:1, KJV), "who holds office in the congregation" (NEB).

Juniastet, considered by many scholars to have been a woman, was "eminent among the apostles" (Rom. 16:7, NEB).

Women and men who proclaimed God's message in the public assembly were given instructions by Paul (I Cor. 11:5).

Deaconesses were appointed in the congregation at Ephesus (I. Tim. 5:9).

Women labored with Paul "to spread the Gospel" (Phil. 4:3).

called to this ministry and in her article witnesses to that. She has also made a special study of what the Bible says about women's work, worth, and role. She was founder of the "Heart to Heart" radio program, and ministers to families through Concord Associates in radio/newspaper messages and literature distribution.

I am from Bridgewater, Virginia, and feel that as a Christian I am called to minister within the body of the church. I have done this mainly through writing. I have been a part-time student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, and am working on a multi-volume children's story Bible soon to be published by Herald Press. - *Eve B. MacMaster*

The amazing thing is that these accounts took place when woman's status was shamefully low. Also amazing is the church's reluctance to be as up to date as Old and New Testament times in recognizing women's gifts and using them. In her book, *In Search of God's Ideal Woman*, Dorothy R. Pape mentions Frederick Franson, first missionary commissioned by D. L. Moody's church. She says, "He carefully noted every reference to any kind of speaking ministry or responsible position of women in both the Old and New Testaments and comes up with nearly 100. . . . He emphasizes that it is very strange that the two verses that appear to be against woman's spiritual ministry should be made the basis of a doctrine which the whole thrust of the rest of Scripture is against. He warns that this is usually how heresies begin."

What situations caused Paul to speak of women proclaiming God's message in one part of his letter (I Cor. 11:5) and to call for women to be silent in another part (I Cor. 14:34)? How could asking husbands at home have anything to do with women exercising the spiritual gift of praying or prophesying in the public assembly? *Halley's Bible Handbook* says, "There must have been some local circumstance, unknown to us, that gave point to these instructions."

One wonders at the fact that male theologians rendered the Greek word *diakonos* as *servant* when referring to Phoebe (Rom. 16:1, KJV) but rendered the same word as *minister* when applied to Paul and Apollos (I Cor. 3:5, KJV) and as *deacon* when referring to other male officers of the church (I Tim. 3:10, 12, 13, KJV). The New English Bible renders Rom. 16:1: "I commend to you Phoebe a fellow Christian who holds office in the congregation."

Dorothy R. Pape says, "Theologians are much concerned about office and status and the risk of concluding that a woman could really have been an official in the early church. To me, the vital question is, rather, does God ever want women to open their mouths to proclaim Christ or explain the Scriptures or is God's ideal for us to be always dumb except about trivialities?"

Resources

Bushnell, *God's Word to Women* (Ray B. Munson, Box 52, North Collins, NY 14111);

Clemens, *Woman Liberated* (Herald Press);

Gundry, *Woman Be Free!* (Zondervan);

Lindskoog, *On My Way Up From Eden* (David C. Cook);

Mollenkott, *Women, Men and the Bible* (Abingdon);

Pape, *In Search of God's Ideal* (InterVarsity Press).

The Other Side, a monthly magazine of "justice, rooted in Christian discipleship," devoted its July 1979 issue to "Women in Pulpits." Copies are available for \$1 each from Post Office Box 12236, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19144.

Toward a New Theology of Ordination, edited by Marianne H. Micks and Charles P. Price, Somerville, Massachusetts: Greeno, Haden & Co., Ltd., 1976, 111 pp.

Bible passages have been used or misused in such a way as to place upon women an unfair share of responsibilities in marriage and family. In the *Amplified Version* of Eph. 5:21-33, the instruction that wives should reverence their husbands is amplified ten times. The instruction that husbands are to love their wives enough to die for them is not amplified at all. Contrary to the way it has usually been taught, this passage indicates in verse 21 that every living person needs to learn submission, not just wives. In the verses that follow wives are told how to do it, then husbands are told how to do it.

One wonders why a doctrine of parenting for fathers has not been built on Eph. 6:4 (KJV): ". . . Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Bible teachers have mostly gone along with the idea that parenting is for mothers, not fathers. It is more than interesting that the generic term *fathers*, meant to include both parents, is taught in such a way as to exclude fathers from sharing responsibilities at home, while in other passages the generic term *men*, meant to include women, is taught in such a way as to exclude women from sharing responsibilities at church.

We have been taught well that Sarah obeyed Abraham (I Peter 3:6). Have we ever been taught that God once told Abraham to obey Sarah (Gen. 21:12)? The King James Version here renders as "hearken unto" a word that in its other passages such as Gen. 22:18 is rendered "obey." We have not yet built a doctrine of obedience of husbands to wives on the basis of Gen. 21:12.

God created humankind in His own image. "Male and female he created them. . . . Let *them* have dominion" over fish, birds, cattle, "and over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26, 27). "I will make him a *helper* fit for him" (Gen. 2:18, RSV). The term helper does not imply subordination. The identical term is most often used of God as helper. Woman was not created to serve Adam, but to serve with Adam.

"Women and Men in Team Ministry," five-page article by Elizabeth G. Yoder in the July 1979 issue of *Builder*, published jointly by the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church. Five team ministries are described: how they divide the work, the strengths and struggles they experience. People cited are Joe and Emma Richards (Lombard, Illinois), Ken and Anne Neufeld Rupp (Middlebury, Indiana), Peter Ediger and Marilyn Miller (Arvada, Colorado), Lee and Betty Hochstetler (Chicago, Illinois), and Martha Smith and Ron Rempel (Kitchener, Ontario).

Offer: In her article "Women in the Bible," Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus makes reference to a number of Scriptures she has compiled through the years on the work, worth, role of women. If you want to receive a more complete list, send a stamped and self-addressed business envelope to her at 1111 Mt. Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

In the context of the fall, sin, and the curse God said to Eve, “. . . in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Gen. 3:16). Was this a descriptive or a prescriptive statement? According to Gal. 3:28 the whole superior/inferior system is done away with in Christ.

The orthodox Jewish male was taught to thank God daily that he was not born a Gentile, a slave, a woman. Paul spoke to those very categories when he said, “In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female” (Gal. 3:28).

Personally, I believe Paul broke custom just as much as he dared to without breaking up the church of his time. He sent a slave to his master intending that the principle of equality he insisted upon would bring about changes. He told Philemon to have Onesimus back, “no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother” (Philemon 16, NIV). As to women locked into their shamefully low position of that time, what changes could be expected as a result of the freedom and equality in Christ spoken of in Galatians 3:28?

Little change has come in some quarters of the church. In fact, earlier progress has been lost. In one congregational discussion the question was asked, “What is meant by reference to woman as the ‘weaker sex’ (I Pet. 3:7)?” The pastor answered that it means she is weaker in every way: physically, spiritually, mentally, and morally! Tyndale New Testament Commentaries say the passage means a husband “should recognize her more limited physical powers as a woman.”

As one who has felt that God gifted and called her for a speaking ministry, I find the most moving thing on the whole question is the way Jesus respected, valued, and commissioned women, breaking the customs of His day in doing so. When Jesus was born into the world the status of Jewish women had never been lower. No doubt He knew well the oral and written traditions that put women down. Did he know about Aristotle’s statement, “Women are all worthless”? Had he known of “expectant” fathers instructing their wives, “If it’s a boy, keep it; if it’s a girl, expose it” (abandon it without food and shelter to die)? Surely Jesus knew the rabbinical dictum, “The world cannot exist without males and females, but happy is he whose children are sons and woe to him whose children are daughters.” Jesus knew well that men avoided speaking to women in public, even to the women in their own families.

With these things in mind (and many more that space does not permit), we see that Jesus radically broke custom in His day. His longest recorded private conversation was with a woman at a public well. (Of all things a Jewish man, a rabbi, speaking to a Samaritan woman, a sinner.) According to the Bible record she is the first person to whom Jesus revealed that he was the Messiah. This woman who had had a sordid history went back to her town to proclaim Jesus’ Messiahship (Jn. 4:1-42). The first persons commissioned by Jesus to proclaim the news of His resurrection were women? (The disciples did not believe them, of course.)

To women who also feel a call to a speaking ministry, I give these words from my heart to yours:

Jesus is risen from death! Stand on your tip toes and shout for joy. Sing the message out and live it out. Tell it to men and women.

Declare it on the authority of Jesus himself (the custom-breaker) who said to women in a time when their word meant little, “Do not be afraid. Go and take word to my brothers.”

Yes, proclaim the Word to brothers. Do not be afraid. The message is great enough to overshadow your fears. Then along with your brothers tell the whole world that Jesus has conquered death for all who come to Him.

Seminary Deans Report on Women in Ministry

Eve B. MacMaster and Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus asked the deans of the three Mennonite seminaries to report on what their schools are doing to prepare women for ministry, and what they see in the future. Here are their replies.

AMBS and Women in Ministry

A significant development at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries over the last several years has been the increased number of women in our student body. Similar to the 1978-79 ratios, the 1979-80 first semester enrollment consists of 83 women, 37% of the total enrollment of 222 students. Many of these are enrolled part-time. Whereas women constitute only 24% of the fulltime enrollments, (31 of 128) they make up 56% of the parttime enrollment (52 of 93). All courses and programs at AMBS are open equally to men and women. The same is true for positions on committees, planning chapels, and participation in extra-curricular activities generally.

During the 1979-80 school year, two special features—a short course and a lectureship series—address themselves to the contemporary issues of male/female relationships. As a special offering running from October 17-November 21, Herta Funk offered a course “Women in Church and Ministry.” Herta Funk’s course focused on six areas: Women Through Time, Women in Church Structures, Women in Global Perspectives, Men’s Roles as Related to Women’s Roles, and Women and Current Issues.

During the week of October 29-November 1, I presented the Conrad Grebel Lectureship on the AMBS campus. The title was “Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women: Hermeneutical Hurdles” and spoke to the issue of male/female relationships in the context of biblical interpretation. Since biblical interpretation is one of the major hindrances to women finding opportunities for fulfillment in the ministries of the church, the lectureship addressed that issue.

During the January interterm, professors Jacob Enz and Gertrude Roten offered a regular curricular course on “Man As Male and Female,” based on the exegesis of the Hebrew and Greek biblical texts. This course

provided opportunity for an in-depth study of the biblical teaching on this subject. In the future, we are hoping to make available on a yearly basis either this exegesis course or a "Women in Church and Ministry" course.

Seminary policy allows spouses of full-time students to audit courses at no cost.

Significant involvements of women in the AMBS program include membership on the Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Goshen Biblical Seminary Boards; two women on the faculty, Gertrude Roten half-time and Pauline Kennel for one course; and theological center guests who are invited to campus for two weeks (LaVerne J. Dick in 1978-79, and in 1979-80 Ms. Helen E. Falls, Professor of Missions from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Mary Ann and Paul Boschman). Eight women regularly work at the seminaries in various staff positions. All these assignments, both the leadership roles and the work in the support system of the institution, contribute much to the educational and equipping tasks of the seminary.

Women graduating from the seminary have taken various types of ministry in the church. Jake Elias, Director of Field Education, reports that eight women graduated in May 1979. Three are serving as associate pastors: Lucille Watt in Rochester, Indiana; Wilma Bailey in Saginaw, Michigan; and Margaret Richer in Normal, Illinois. Lois Janzen has resumed an earlier career as English teacher, but is also involved in offering her gifts in a new Mennonite fellowship in San Francisco. Dawn Ruth Nelson has accepted an assignment under the Mennonite Board of Missions in Dublin, Ireland as part of a team ministry seeking to witness in a variety of ways. Marie-Noelle Faure is continuing her teaching ministry in the European Mennonite Bible School in Bienenberg, Switzerland. Winifred Beechy, graduating with an M.A. in Peace Studies, has assumed leadership of the Peace and Social Concerns Commission under the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. Sandra Hess is continuing seminary study in preparation for ministry in music. - *Willard M. Swartley, Acting Dean, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.*

Women in Training at EMS for Ministry

Over the years women have been part of our seminary student body. The percentage has been low and has remained fairly constant during the growth of the seminary from several students to nearly one hundred. In the fall term of 1979-80, the number of women is 9.

Women have always been admitted to all programs of study at EMS. The Mennonite women have, for the most part, not expressed an interest in pastor-preacher roles, preferring teaching or counseling roles in institutional, congregational, or mission settings. In the last several years, however, some have openly wrestled with the dilemma of a sense of calling to leadership roles not presently open to them in the average congregation.

The seminary has not taken an official position on the role of women in ministry. It has, however, made its programs fully available to women and has supported women attempting to find their way in the present time of transition. On the other hand, requirements such as homiletics have been waived for women who were not contemplating a speaking ministry, in order not to exclude them from benefits of theological training. In recent years a number of women students from other denominations who are preparing for a pastoral role have helped to unfreeze the *status quo* and to generate a new atmosphere in which honest facing of our male-dominated thought and behavior patterns is possible.

The president of EMS has encouraged the institution to support the pastoral team concept—man/woman or husband/wife. This would have the effect of promoting the idea of seminary education for more women. Speaking as dean, I project that EMS will speak to the matter of women in ministry in two ways: first, by continuing to pursue admission policies and curriculum requirements which allow women maximal benefit from our program and, second, by faculty participation in the church's reflection and action on the issue of women in ministry. In this way we recognize our responsibility to answer to the church but also to assist the church in finding guidance. - *George R. Brunk, III, Dean, Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

Women Called to a Speaking Ministry

The preparation of women for ministry is very much a part of the orientation and program of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. Present enrollment of women is twenty-one (out of a total of 155). Seven of these are full-time students, seven are part-time, and seven are auditors. Women are welcome in all programs of the seminary; however, at present only two are enrolled in the Master of Divinity program. One of these is preparing for a pastoral ministry, and the other for the hospital chaplaincy.

Women who are spouses of students are encouraged to take classes along with their husbands, are included in the small group experiences at various levels, and are offered one course per year especially designed to meet their needs as pastor's wives.

A review of past experience indicates that, in fact, although welcome, very few women have enrolled in the Master Divinity program. More often they are found in M.A. programs which prepared them for teaching assignments or for second staff positions in the churches. This year the first Mennonite Brethren woman is enrolled in the M.Div. program, and she is not planning on a pastoral ministry.

The situation at the seminary is a rather accurate reflection of the position that the Mennonite Brethren churches have taken traditionally, namely, that women should not be ordained for the pastoral ministry. Therefore, as a seminary we could not honestly encourage Mennonite Brethren women to enroll in the

M.Div. program with the hope of obtaining a pastoral assignment in our churches. Those who have taken the course are mostly from other denominations where a place in pastoral ministry for women is assured.

We would like to continue to offer programs of instruction at the seminary that will prepare both women and men for ministries in our churches. Many service options are available to all persons whom God has called. The question of women preparing for the pastoral ministry will need further attention. Where a woman receives such a call from the Lord and the local church confirms that call, the seminary is desirous of providing the necessary training. - *George G. Konrad, Dean, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary*

Mennonite Woman in the Wilderness: The Three Temptations

Eve B. MacMaster

Then was Mennonite Woman led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

And when the tempter came to her, he said,

"If you are a worthwhile person, child care and housekeeping are beneath you. You deserve recognition and rewards for your achievements. You're more than a pretty face! Join the secular women's movement. Attack the feminine mystique! You're as capable as any man!"

But she answered and said,

"Do you mean equal pay for equal work? Yes! And an end to the traditional sex stereotypes? It's high time! But wait a minute. I enjoy being a woman. And I don't want to ignore my family. There's more to life than a paycheck."

Then the devil taketh her up into the boudoir of the Total Woman, and setteth her on a pinnacle of fluffy femininity.

And saith to her,

"If you are a successful, fulfilled woman, seek your goals through men. Flatter them. Pander their egos. Be manipulative. After all, change is scary. You need a man to take care of you. Join the conservative evangelical backlash. Attack women's lib! You're a fascinating little creature!"

Mennonite woman said unto him,

"Sure, times are changing, but I'm not afraid. Maleness is not godliness! That's idolatry. You can't achieve right ends by wrong means. There's more to life than sex and security!"

Again, the devil taketh her up into an exceeding high position, and showeth her professional degrees and pulpits and the key to the executive washroom.

And saith to her,

"See these status jobs in the church! Assert yourself! It's your turn to share in the power structure. Isn't it frustrating to have your gifts go unrecognized? Join the biblical feminists. Demand ordination and recognition! It's not just an ego trip. You'd be serving the church!"

Then saith Mennonite Woman unto him,

"Get thee hence, Satan.

"Of course women could be pastors and bishops and college presidents and denominational executives. The Holy Spirit gives gifts of ministry to all Christians, including the gift of leadership to women. But spiritual authority doesn't come through the exercise of personal ambition and power. Women don't have to copy the mistakes of men and compete for status and position. Christ shows us His way of love. He came as a servant, not as a high status professional. Women know a few things about servanthood—after all, we've had a lot of practice! There's more to life than power."

Then the devil leaveth her, and behold, angels came and ministered unto her.

Blueberries and Briars

Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus

Last summer when the children, grandchildren, and I were together (almost all of the fifteen), we decided to go swimming. The problem was how to get Grandma (me) and the children down a steep cliff of 100 or more feet if we took the shortest way to the swimming place. It was decided, instead, that we go the long circuitous, more level way.

With Nathaniel in his arms, Kathie's John led the way for what seemed to be a distance of one mile. We were delighted to find blueberries (ready-made refreshments) along the way. As we picked and ate them it was an occasion for rest and easy conversation across three generations. Farther on were patches of moss in different textures and shades of green, lovely ferns, flowers and trees—a feast of beauty for appreciative eyes.

There were also briars and thickets impossible to get through without inconvenience and pain. Some of us went into the water, some sat on bumpy rocks and bathed our feet while holding little ones.

When it was time to go I said to son Eugene, "I don't want to go that long way back, but by way of the cliff."

He said, "Mother! The cliff is so steep that I have a long rope hanging down the whole way so we younger ones can make it."

I said, "I'll try it. You can climb behind me to help if I slip, and I'll hold on to the rope ahead of you."

We started up the cliff or tried to. It was hard to get a toehold anywhere with my smooth leather shoes. Sometimes Eugene would hold the heel of my shoe in his hand so I could take one more step. I began to wish I had learned to wear the jeans the children had given me

for Christmas seven months before. At one place above my foot I saw the base of a young tree as the next step to take, but could reach it only after Eugene pushed my foot up that far.

As if I did not have yet enough pain and struggle, before I knew it the rope I was clinging to took me right over a nest of yellow jackets and I got stung badly. Finally we were near the top where the steps were easier and soon we were in Eugene's and Pat's back yard.

This is something of the story of my life. There have been blueberries, many pleasantries, good fellowship, refreshing times.

In the providence of God my parents somehow built security and strength into my life so that I could make my pilgrimage safely. My father, bishop in Virginia, taught his daughters as well as his sons to memorize Scriptures, poetry, and readings for programs in church and community. He helped me with speeches and debates up through my two years of college. He helped his children to know the Lord and to be active in the church, but did not believe women should be ordained to the ministry.

Increasingly through the years, however, I sensed a calling to a speaking ministry. The church never officially recognized this call but, as I see it, God made it possible for me to have a platform by radio (Heart to Heart Broadcast) and newspapers (Family Life Series) which opened the doors and platforms of many congregations for speaking engagements.

My husband supported me in my calling and in my risk-taking. He went with me, as did a non-Mennonite minister, when I first went to a radio station to see about starting a women's broadcast. He gave the broadcast its name. Later he entered into a speaking ministry with me as we participated in week-end family life conferences together. He was mature enough in his thinking and busy enough in his own work as a teacher and writer that he was not threatened by my work. ("Men of quality are not threatened by women of equality.") He helped with the care of our five children and did not object to the hiring of enough help for me to be away from home duties part time. He encouraged me to use all of my gifts fully. (On the cliff climb our son Eugene symbolized the way his father helped me to take risks in breaking from the rigid mold for Mennonite women.)

There were thickets, briars, and stings along the way. Church and society, for the most part, held that parenting is 100% for mothers, zero percent for fathers. It was assumed that since some women are uncomfortable speaking in public, then all women should be. Rarely was it recognized that there are differing gifts among women, given by the Spirit for use in the church. Women (sometimes the greatest obstacle to necessary change) warned me against the "wide use of women's gifts."

A sting came in response to a writeup I had in the *Gospel Herald* suggesting four reasons that restrictions are placed on the use of women's gifts in the church. Among other untrue things, the anonymous writer said, "I picture you as counseling girls to have

abortions, seeing no harm in divorces, and stomping down any man's authority you don't like." However, the *Gospel Herald* writeup brought dozens of affirming letters from men and women over the states. They were like salve for the sting.

The greatest affirmations of all were times when I felt God affirmed me and spoke to me. On one occasion I was driving from an out-of-state speaking engagement when I had a strong impression that I should stop to see a Christian businessman who had expressed interest in sponsoring my Heart to Heart Broadcast. I argued, "Lord, I wrote to him about it twice, but he never replied and I am embarrassed to go."

The answer was, "I said you are to go."

I went. The wife met me at the door and said her husband was out in the field getting corn for their markets. As I walked toward my car puzzled, the businessman drove in. I said, "Brother B, I am embarrassed to appear to ask you to sponsor my broadcast, but the Lord made me come."

He said, "Sister Ruth, the Lord was talking to me in the field just now, about your broadcast and I have told him I would sponsor it."

On another occasion my husband and I had traveled 200 miles to a Saturday evening wedding. On Sunday morning while preparing to attend church in the area, I felt a strong impression as though I were being anointed for a special task at church that morning. "Whatever it is, Lord, just help me," I prayed.

When Sunday school classes were over and all were assembled for the worship service, the bishop said, "The pastor who was to have the message has been called home to take his wife to the doctor. I see that Grant and Ruth Stoltzfus are in the audience and I am giving them one minute to come to the platform and give messages." The Lord had given me more than one minute's notice. God graciously gave enabling strength and creative ideas. (There are times when I do not seem to have such clear directions.)

I bow my heart in thanksgiving to God for His grace, for those who shared the blueberries with me along the way, for those who helped me through the briars and up the steep cliff.

Who Killed Woman's Gift?*

Who killed woman's gift?

"I," said the man of terror

With his mix of truth and error.

"I'd rather not hear the word of truth

"Than to hear it from a Jane or Ruth.

"I killed woman's gift."

Who saw her gift die?

"I," said the woman who only knits.

"These ministering women give me fits.

"Why can't all women be of the same mold

"And just look out the window

"When they are old?

"I saw her gift die."

Who'll be chief mourner?
 "I," said the freeing man
 "I never favored the put-down and ban.
 "Women should not wait till they're 63
 "To see if the church will set them free.
 "I'll be chief mourner."

Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus
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*With apologies to Mother Goose and Cock Robin

News and Verbs

Gayle Gerber Koontz, previous editor of *Women in Church and Society Report*, has accepted an appointment to the executive committee of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. She is also currently formulating a dissertation topic for a doctoral in philosophy of religion and ethics. Her address is 27 Fairlawn St., Everett, MA 02149.

Helen Unrau has taken the position of Christian Education Director in her home congregation, the Altona (Manitoba) Mennonite Church.

An exception to the male-dominated religious air waves of mid-America radio is Evangelist Marilyn Hickey out of Denver, Colorado. Her program is entitled "Life for Laymen."

On the first and second days of February, 1980, a workshop entitled "Equipping Women for Service" was sponsored by the Portland Mennonite Church and the Pacific Coast District Women's Missionary Service Commission. Beulah Kauffman was resource person. "It was a time for women to receive teaching and training in leadership and to be supportive of each other," reports Nancy S. Lapp, task force member for Women in Church and Society.

The Swedish parliament at Stockholm has decreed that daughters as well as sons of monarchs may become the country's rulers. If two-year-old Princess Victoria, eldest child in the current royal family, ever succeeds to the throne, she will be only the fourth ruling Swedish queen since the Viking era.

Gloria Martin Eby of Kitchener, Ontario, is serving as director of student affairs at Conrad Grebel College. This is a one-year interim position in the chaplaincy department. Eby has also been appointed moderator of the Mennonite Church's Board of Congregational Ministries Committee.

Pauline Schlegel has been appointed book buyer for Provident Bookstore (Ontario). Previous to this, she was manager of the Provident store in London, Ontario.

At their 1979 assembly, the Board of Managers of the Christian and Missionary Alliance was directed to study the role of women in ministry. Dr. Marilyn Weldin, on the faculty of St. Paul Bible College, introduced an amendment (which was approved) to have women on the study committee. (Weldin was last year licensed as a deaconess.)

Mary Kay Thompson Treteault, staff member at the Massachusetts Department of Education, Cambridge, has authored *Women in America: Half of History* (Rand McNally). She says, "Much of the history we teach emphasizes traditionally male activities, like politics. Women are pictured, if at all as adjuncts to the male." Her book uses primary sources like McGuffey's reader, entire sections from an 1815 article written by a "factory girl," and 18th Century advertising for Boston blacksmith Mary Salmon. Her book, with suggested questions for class discussion, is designed to supplement conventional history textbooks. The next step says Treteault, is to write "a real, integrated text."

Marie Wiens, Hillsboro, Kansas, Mennonite Central Committee Executive Committee member, was part of a seven-member North American Mennonite delegation to meet with representatives of the Gossner-Mission in the German Democratic Republic in order to check interest in sponsoring a student/Praktikant in East Germany. Gossner-Mission belongs to that part of the East German church that has sought to find a positive role for the church under socialism. Representatives described recent attempts to express peace-making through resistance to introducing military education in the schools.

The Women's Missionary and Service Commission of the Mennonite Church plans to publish a book on Mennonite women, 1683-1983, in commemoration of the tricentennial of the coming of Mennonites to North America. Help is needed in collecting material, and in naming persons who should be included. Send information and queries by 15 May 1980 to WMSC, Box 1245, Elkhart, Indiana.

To more completely hear what members of small congregations experience, Elsie Epp gave a questionnaire to members of the mission society at Bethel College, Marion, South Dakota. She shared findings at a gathering of several Women in Mission groups. (Nineteen of the thirty-four churches in the Northern District—General Conference Mennonite—have less than 100 members.) Epp concludes: "A small church calls one to repentance and forgiveness. . . . Learning to work with those who rub you the wrong way is a necessary ingredient of such a group." - *Northern Light*

MCC Botswana Women's Concerns Committee (composed of Lucille Teichert, Anne Mease, Joyce Eby, Laila Millar, Jay Goering, and Joan Gerig) is encouraging MCC constituents to contact their denominational offices in behalf of equalizing the ratio of women to men on the MCC board. "While women comprise 52 percent of MCC's total personnel (as listed in June 1979) they make up only six percent of the board." - *Intercom*, January 1980

Women's projects get less than 1 percent of private foundation funding. Researcher Esther Schackster says that's because "women's programs touch economic, political, and social issues that challenge many accepted public policies and traditional life styles." Schackster also notes that the vast majority of grants which are approved go to women's groups which emphasize individual—not institutional—change. - *In These Times*, quoted in the November 1979 issue of *The Other Side*

Which Way Women?

Dorothy Yoder Nyce, Editor

A Project of MCC Peace Section's Task Force on Women in Church and Society

WHICH WAY WOMEN? is a collection of 42 articles plus bibliographies and poetry, written predominantly by Mennonites and intended primarily for a Mennonite audience. Published midway through the International Women's Decade, the book materials cluster around the three major themes of International Women's Year - Equality, Development, and Peace.

Topics such as:	Jesus and women	feminist theology
	sexuality	women and consumerism
	parenting	singleness
	women and peace	women in prison work
	early Anabaptist women	black, Indian, West Bank women

are approached from perspectives of disciplined research, personal experience, caring commitment, and self-understanding. Perhaps the insights of Diane, Ruth and Willard; Evelyn, Muriel and Johanna; Emma, Gayle, Winifred and Hedy will help you make responsible choices and determine "which way" in your life.

WHICH WAY WOMEN? is available in soft cover, spiral bound format. Please fill in the form below and return to:

MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women
21 S. 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501

Cost per copy is \$3.00 U.S. (\$3.50 Canada). You will be billed when your order is shipped.

Please send me WHICH WAY WOMEN?, edited by Dorothy Yoder Nyce, a project of MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women.

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more News and Verbs

Gladys Goering, Moundridge, Kansas, is the author of a book *Women in Search of Mission*, to be released July 1980. It is the story of the General Conference Mennonite women's organization, Women in Mission (formerly Women's Missionary Association). The book tells how the organization began, its successes and failures, and its place in history.

Miriam Krantz, nutritionist with the Mennonite Board of Missions in Nepal, has helped the Nepalese develop what has come to be called "Super Flour" made out of roasted and ground cereal grains and pulses. Educating the women in ways to use this flour is the next step.

Jane Roeschley, Mennonite Central Committee worker, has begun a Child Care Skills course in Lawrence Tavern, Jamaica. "My goal," she says, "is to prepare students for jobs where they will work with young children—perhaps in a day care center, a preschool, or hospital. Roeschley teaches prenatal maternal care, reproduction, infant care, child development, and first aid.

Mennonite Central Committee staff members *Nancy Heisey*, *Liz Hunsberger*, *Griselda Shelly*, and *Doreen Harms* spoke in Ohio churches on January 27 after the MCC annual meeting at Kidron Church.

Barbara Howell, issue analyst for Bread for the World, says that U.S. women are more likely to be undernourished than men. Women's generally lower social, political, and economic status is directly related to their disproportionate poverty and hunger. Despite women's major civil rights gains over the last few years, they still lack job training, and they receive less pay than men for the same work. In May 1978 the weekly median income of men was \$272; for women it was \$166.

Linda Schmidt, former administrative assistant for Mennonite Central Committee's Task Force on Women in Church and Society, has compiled a beginning directory of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ women who are interested in college faculty and administrative positions as well as open to serving as guest lecturers, chapel or convocation speakers, class resource persons, or consultants. For a free copy of the list and summarized resumes, write to MCC Peace Section, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501. Complete resumes are on file in the Peace Section office, and can be received upon request. In December 1979 the directory was sent to twenty-nine Mennonite and Brethren in Christ schools and organizations.

A delegation of Japanese atomic and hydrogen bomb survivors will tour North American cities from 26 March to 11 April 1980. Among the delegation will be a representative of the Japan Housewives Association. More information can be had from *Betsy Beyler*, 100 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

The Ecumenical Women's Center of the United Methodist Church has produced a hymnbook that uses inclusive language when referring to God. *Because We Are One People* is recommended for women's groups and can prove inspirational to everyone. Order from Service Center, Board for Global Ministries, 7280 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH 45237. The price is \$3.

Rabbi Linda Holtzman, 26, is said to be the only woman in North America to be presiding rabbi of a congregation. There are twenty-one women rabbis in the world, and others are assistant rabbis or education directors. The 110-family Beth Israel congregation, Coatesville, Pennsylvania, is part of the conservative branch of Judaism, which does not ordain women. But the synagogue chose Miss Holtzman, who was ordained in the reconstructionist branch of the faith.

William J. Callahan, Jesuit priest and leading advocate of admission of women to the Roman Catholic priesthood, has been silenced and ordered transferred. Callahan is founder of the 2,500-member Priests for Equality which also advocates admitting women to ordination, and had participated in several demonstrations for that cause during the pope's visit to Washington in October. Callahan was told that it was "completely inappropriate" to challenge the pope about "clear directions he has given the church." After the pope's visit, 180 faculty members of Chicago-area Roman Catholic institutions signed a statement voicing regret at the "closed model of hierarchical authority" and defending "reasoned dissent" on various matters such as women's ordination. *Rosemary Radford Ruether*, giving leadership to this group, was quoted (in December 1979 in Lincoln, NE): "A church that is basically . . . repressive in its structures is not a very credible bearer of the message of . . . religious freedom to the rest of society." *One nun* on CBS News Magazine (1 November 1979) said, "The Roman Church has a hard time connecting justice with justice for women. . . . I used to 'leave the church' at least once a week. But I am a part of it. I have to fight hard to right the wrongs."

Five thousand women took to the streets in San Salvador, El Salvador, in December 1979, demanding that the government end political violence. Men throwing rocks and swinging sticks broke up the demonstration, shouting, "The streets are ours!" The women were prevented from approaching the national palace in the center of the city. Witnesses said that police did not intervene. - *Omaha World Herald*, 11 December 1979

When you come across news and verbs that you would like to share with the larger constituency, send them to me at 4830 Woodland Ave., Lincoln, NE 68516. - *Muriel Thiessen Stackley*, Editor

Hedy Sawadsky, Colorado Springs, Colorado, spoke to Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Nebraska, on 3 February 1980 on the subject of peacemaking.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Muriel,

John Howard Yoder was here the first Sunday in January. He helped us sort through some of our questions on ordination and forms of church leadership. He affirmed our move away from the single-pastor model, but challenged us to disperse leadership even more by working harder at defining gifts and then holding persons accountable for using those gifts. He also pointed out that our ideas on ordination, qualifications, etc., are not really biblical—in fact, there is not real New Testament argument or case for giving one person in a church a holy aura and seeing them as the spiritual focus, interpreter, etc. Perhaps we should think more of ordaining committees of ministers. Spiritual leadership is the issue, not the model of the single male leader.

Joyce M. Shutt
(Fairfield Mennonite Church)
Orrtanna
Pennsylvania 17353
11 January 1979

Dear Editor:

I've been receiving several of your Reports and I have greatly enjoyed them. I was very interested in the Focus on New Men/New Roles. I would have liked very much to attend the conference of November 2-4 on Women in Ministry; however, my working world hadn't allowed the time off and I had not been aware in time, of the conference to be able to arrange for the time. I have a feeling that it will have been a great success.

More power to you and thanks for the reports, and hopefully they won't stop coming. Thank you.

Rosie Penner
196 Balmoral
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 1X6, Canada
9 November 1979

Looking Ahead

The Task Force on Women in Church and Society has outlined the following topics for special focus in the next four issues of *Report*:

March-April: Returned Missionary Women
May-June: Depression
July-August: Native American/Canadian Women
September-October: Developing Leadership Skills
November-December: Women in Mennonite Business

Anita Buller (Winnipeg) is compiling feature material on returned missionary women; Anna Mary Brubacher on depression; Betsy Beyler (Washington, D.C.) on Native American/Canadian women (this is part II, the first part being *Report* #26, July 1979); Rosie Epp on developing leadership skills; and Mary Dueck on women in Mennonite business.

Are you aware of written or audio-visual resources on these topics? We would like to recommend them in *Report*. Have you (or do you know someone who has) been researching or writing on these topics, particularly as they relate to peace issues, Mennonites, or the Christian church? What actions have been taken in these areas in the community where you are living or by your church?

Women in Church and Society

Task force members are: Anna Mary Brubacher, Kitchener, Ontario; Rosie Epp, Wichita, Kansas; Mary Dueck, Fresno, California; Edith Krause, Vancouver, British Columbia; Nancy S. Lapp, Albany, Oregon; and Elsa Redekopp, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Quotable

"We believe that gifts given by God to His children, whether they be male or female, should be called forth in the life of the covenant community. As it has happened among us, so we affirm it among God's people." - Joe and Emma Richards in *"Women and Men in Team Ministry"* by Elizabeth G. Yoder, **Builder**, July 1979.

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The *Report* is a bi-monthly publication of the MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church and Society. Correspondence should be sent to Editor Muriel Thiessen Stackley, 4830 Woodland, Lincoln, NE 68516.

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